

between the patient and the doctor, and you find yourself spending as much time worried about paperwork and forms and what the government is going to do than sometimes your dealing with your patient. That's not good health care. And that certainly isn't good health care reform.

All of us who are health care professionals know that the treatment should not be more harmful than the illness itself. And what happens with the health care bill that was passed, when you look at some of the parts of this and realize what it does to the patient, to taxes, to employers, to hospitals, to community health centers, to the cost of drugs, you have to conclude that we did not fix the problem; we financed the problem and it is growing and growing. And that's not the right direction.

Let me give you a couple of examples.

This bill, this act, actually creates about 1,900-plus new duties and responsibilities for the Secretary of Health. It has a hundred or more boards, panels, and commissions of people that we don't yet know who they are to write regulations that we don't yet know what they are.

We also know that despite the words about the goal, the actual means to get there and what happens isn't what is purported to be doing.

Let's look at, for example, we keep hearing about 35 million Americans will be covered. And yet, we also hear from various consulting firms that it won't be 9 million Americans that will lose their health insurance, it may be tens of millions of people who will lose their private insurance. So covering 35 million but perhaps the same or double that losing their insurance doesn't get us to where we need to be.

We also heard that health care costs were going to go down. I had someone from HHS from Philadelphia come to my office and they told me with a smile that wasn't it great that health care costs were only going up 2 or 3 percent. I asked this person if they bothered to talk to some of the employers in the State of Pennsylvania, because a lot of them told me their health care costs are going up 20 and 30 and 40 percent. I asked if they'd talked to some of the families whose children were covered on plans before that exclusively cover children to find out that those plans were not going to cover children any more because of the way the government decided to design those.

Our goal should be to treat. Our goal should be to help. Our goal should not be to stop at just rhetoric and say, "We have good intentions, and therefore we have good outcomes." But good intentions don't make good outcomes.

Where we could be spending money is on some real reforms. One of the issues that we've been united on has been to help community health centers. One community health center in Pittsburgh that I visited with, the Squirrel Hill

Health Center, treats about 700,000 individuals through more than 2.3 million visits annually. These community health centers in Pennsylvania, there are 45 in 67 counties—60 percent urban and 40 percent rural. Their patient base is 68 percent Medicaid, uninsured, and 93 percent of patients of incomes at or below the 200 percent of the Federal poverty level.

What is interesting is how much lower in costs those clinics throughout Pennsylvania, quite frankly throughout the Nation, could provide high-quality health care.

But what we've created is a couple of burdens. I found it interesting as part of the health care bill that one of the things we passed was an amendment that Congressman GENE GREEN, a Democrat from Texas, and I had authored to allow doctors to volunteer at community health centers. If Dr. GINGREY wanted to go to a community health center and volunteer, and if I wanted to and any of the other ones, we couldn't do it. And the reason being that those community health centers say, "We can't afford to have you volunteer." Because in order to volunteer, they'd have to pay the medical malpractice costs instead of having them in the Federal Torts Claims Act—employees of those clinics can do that—and that adds to their costs. In the meantime, those clinics are short 10, 15, 20 percent of what they need in providers.

They are a tried and true method of bringing people together, people from a wide range of disciplines: OBGYNs, family practitioners, dentists, podiatrists, social workers, psychologists, to work. That's one of the many things we could be doing. But along those lines, there are a great many things that we can be doing.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I want to thank you, Dr. Murphy, and I appreciate you coming.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time. I know our time is up.

I just refer to our last poster in conclusion: Repeal and Replace ObamaCare.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to start off by saying in response to some of what I've just listened to—and I'm not going to take it point by point. I just want to point out that what we passed last year is not ObamaCare. To the people of this country it is your care. And if you allow it to be repealed, defunded, or picked apart piece-by-piece, President Obama will still have his health care insurance and so will many of the people who are trying to take away yours, your care.

Just remember that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was not to provide care for us. It was to provide care and access to quality, affordable health care for you. It is not ObamaCare. It's your care.

At this time I'd like to yield to my colleague from Maryland, Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS.

Ms. EDWARDS. I would like to thank Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN for the time.

And just a reminder that today, April 4, is a sad remembrance in some ways of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, some 43 years ago. It is such an irony that we're here this evening at this time because there are so many things for which Dr. King fought and struggled that are ever-present today both in our policy and our politics and in our national culture and through our social fabric.

During this year also we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus. It's important for us to remember that the Congressional Black Caucus was founded to tackle the injustices that Dr. King pointed to and to promote equity in the United States and with and through our United States political process.

Dr. King dedicated his life to the then-uncomfortable conversations on injustice faced by African Americans across the country. Dr. King knew that tackling discrimination in the United States could not only focus on knocking down social barriers but also economic barriers that held African American workers, held low-wage workers from economic wealth to sustain their families.

I want to thank Dr. CHRISTENSEN and so many of my other colleagues who've joined me in the introduction of House Resolution 198, recognizing the coordinated struggle of workers during the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike to voice their grievances and reach a collective agreement for rights in the workplace. What an irony here in 2011 that the battles for which Dr. King fought so valiantly are today's battles.

□ 2020

House Resolution 198 has among it, today, 55 cosponsors. We recognize that we may not be able to move this measure to the floor, but it is an important remembrance, commemoration of the struggle of those sanitation workers, those city workers, those municipal workers as they tried to organize.

As Dr. King knew, organized labor is a cornerstone of our democracy, and the organizations of organized labor have altered many facets of our Nation. They've changed our Nation for the better. Organized workers will forever change the labor debate in Memphis through their collective will. That's what happened in Memphis on those days 43 years ago.

Just 2 weeks ago, we recognized the 100-year anniversary of the deadly Tri-angle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which

ushered in improved safety standards for workers. And decades later, the deaths of two sanitation workers in Memphis resulted in a movement to grant workers in Memphis, Tennessee, the basic rights in a workplace. Dr. King believed that the struggle in Memphis for workers' rights was akin to the civil rights movement. It was a partner to the civil rights movement.

The motto of the sanitation workers strike was, "I am a man," signifying the demeaning way in which African American men had been treated and referred to as boys. "I am a man." What powerful words urging the city to grant them the full rights to equality and justice guaranteed under the principles of our Nation. Dr. King stood in solidarity with the strikers in the fight for justice and the basic human rights for all men and women in the workplace and in society.

Indeed, there are many of us in this Congress who stand in solidarity with the strikers and workers across this country, municipal workers, private sector workers, public sector workers who are fighting every day for justice in their workplaces. Indeed, 43 years ago is the struggle of today. And thanks very much to the legacy of those strikers in Memphis and to Dr. King, we actually live in a Nation where workers all over the United States can indeed demand justice and fair working conditions.

These basic rights allow men and women to pursue economic wealth and pursue the American Dream. But in recent days, we face a virtual assault on basic workers' rights, things that we have known for generations in this country. And even though those events are unfolding in Wisconsin, the outcome of whether the unions have the right to collective bargaining in that State will affect union members across this country. Indeed, that was the fight and the struggle for justice of sanitation workers.

I want to refer to Dr. King's speech in Memphis at a rally on behalf of sanitation workers. He said, "We've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through."

We face the same challenge today. We have to push through in States like Wisconsin and Indiana and Ohio and across this country to help public employees and, indeed, all employees fight against the injustices that they face in their workplace.

In Dr. King's last speech, he highlighted the perils at which he sought equality and justice for all men and women. In his words, I quote, "I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land." And for workers, what is that promised land? It is the promised land of a workplace that is safe. It is the promised land in which one makes wages that allow one to take care of one's family and contribute to the community. It is a work-

place that actually respects workers as partners in the success of a company and a workplace.

Dr. King at this time, when he addressed workers in Memphis, had already faced threats against his life, including a stab wound that he had suffered at a book signing in New York. In his speech, Dr. King recalled the doctors saying that had he sneezed following the attack he would have died, but noted he was glad that he did not or else he would have missed the progress in the civil rights movement.

Today is a day of remembrance for so many of us. On the point of injustice, Dr. King said so poignantly the issue is injustice. The issue is the refusal of Memphis to be fair and honest in its dealings with its public servants, who happened to be sanitation workers. Now we have got to keep attention on that. And just as he reminded us 43 years ago, we have to keep the attention on our workers, who struggle every day.

Dr. King was determined to be in Memphis with those workers. And let's think about where we are here 43 years from that fated day in April. Our country is moving out of recession. We continue to stand with workers and stand with job creation, some of us do, to reverse the effects of the recession on our most vulnerable communities, and to empower all Americans, empower workers.

The unemployment rate among the African American population remains far too high, at 16.6 percent in March of this year. Now, the overall unemployment rate has fallen. We are grateful for that. But I think were Dr. King alive today, he would probably acknowledge the struggle of those who are working and those who want to work, the many who are chronically unemployed in their communities across this country.

The unemployment rate among African American men was 20.2 percent in March of this year, just last month. The unemployment rate among African American women was 11.7 percent in March. Put these numbers up against national numbers of unemployment of 8.8 percent. While those numbers again, thanks to the brilliant efforts of the President of the United States, of the Democrats in Congress during the 111th Congress, who actually brought us to a point where we put in some policies that could bring down the unemployment rate, those numbers are still troubling among minority groups.

But I will say, Mr. Speaker, that one of the challenges that we have is that in this country, where workers struggle every day, we look at stagnant wages that have really crippled the American workforce, the public sector workforce, the private sector workforce in this country, that we still have a lot to do when it comes to creating jobs. And yet here we are again this week—I don't know what day we are on—89 days not having created any jobs to address those very concerns that Dr. King had just 43 years ago.

Just a reminder to us all that according to Dr. King, he said so profoundly about the American labor movement, and I quote again Dr. King, and I wish that I could do it with his eloquence, but I think it is important for us to be reminded of his words. "The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival, but a tolerable life." He continued, "The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of union organization crested over our Nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole society."

Dr. King recognized so profoundly the connection between the struggle of workers, the struggle of the sanitation workers in Memphis to the struggles of the American labor movement, and, in fact, to its foundation.

With that, I recognize that my colleague from New York, PAUL TONKO, has joined us on the floor. Perhaps he would care to join in this discussion.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative EDWARDS, for bringing us together this evening on what I think is a very timely discussion.

You know, it seems as though 43-year-old history resonates profoundly today. The same battles for which Martin Luther King had fought, the eloquence with which he raised America's consciousness is needed today, not only in the halls of government but across America, to understand that there is an attack, I believe, on workers.

□ 2030

There is a diminution of the impact of our middle class, our working families in this country, when we look at the fact that the top 10 percent of Americans now own or earn around 50 percent of our national income.

We look at stats from 1950 that has the executive salaries somewhere in a 30-to-1 ratio compared to the American worker. By the year 2000, that had changed drastically to some 300-to-1 to 500-to-1. So it's obvious that the gap between those who are drawing large paychecks and the workers, the masses that make things work, that have the need to have purchasing power so as to enable our economy to function and function well, have been threatened. They have been at risk.

And I think the whole moral fabric that Martin Luther King embraced, the entire mission to raise America's people as one by providing for the dignity of the American workers, was a tremendously strong statement in defense of all people, not just people of color, people of every demographic, people of every racial persuasion that could provide for a stronger America. It was that vision that he had and he shared it

so eloquently, and his climb to the mountaintop was bringing all of America's children and people along.

He knew that the empowerment of the individual meant the empowerment of the society. As we weave the strands of diversity into the fabric of America, our mosaic growing stronger and brighter and more vibrant enables us to be a Nation that really, truly is unique if we could just empower the American worker.

I see the raid now on this middle class in these Chambers, in the congressional Chambers, both the House and the Senate being so focused on a dismantling of the power of the working families, of the true middle class of our society. That is a wrong move. That is one that will devastate our economy and one that is not utilizing, embracing the intellectual capacity of this great Nation.

Cuts to our children through Head Start or in classroom experience is the worst cut of any because it's our future that we are playing with. We are not allowing for the dignity, again, of which Martin Luther King spoke, to be felt in the classroom; and that magic of learning is dulled, is dulled, by these painful cuts.

So we have got to respond, respond with compassion and with our eyes wide open knowing that that message of 43 years ago and that powerful statement made about the dignity of labor, the evening before he was brought down, still speaks to every one of us, or at least ought to, so that we can provide for the sorts of policy and the resource advocacy, the distribution of income across this country in a way that really empowers the individual and families.

That, I think, is the mission that is still there for each and every one of us. So many of us were inspired by the words of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Robert F. Kennedy. It drew people to the public arena. They wanted to be involved; they saw government as a noble mission. And that tarnished atmosphere that's prevailing today has allowed for misrepresentation of facts or denial of data that really should guide our process here, as Martin often called for fairness, for equitable treatment, for justice.

Those are the factors that drive the dignity. So it is a challenge to us, but I think we are up for that challenge, and I remain optimistic. If we just provide the boost to our Nation's working families, to our middle class, then we are all empowered. I think that tide would lift all boats.

So, thank you, Representative EDWARDS, for bringing us together on a very important discussion.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I would like to thank my colleague from Maryland for helping to organize this hour and our colleague from New York for joining us. I was in medical school here in Washington D.C. on the day that Dr. King was assassinated, and it was obviously a very dark day and weekend that followed.

But I recalled, and I think it would have had to have been the Sunday of the following week, was a Sunday dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King. On that day, as you went to church or were out and about D.C., there was such a feeling of fellowship and brotherhood and respect for each other, and even, I would say, love for each other as neighbors in this country and on this planet.

It would be wonderful to see the spirit of that day revived in this Congress and across our Nation as we remember not only the day but, more importantly, the words and the legacy of Dr. King and as we remember all that he was fighting for. Specifically tonight we remember the sanitation workers whose strike he went out to Nashville to support on that fateful evening.

And in his speech he mentioned a few things that he said in that speech the night before he was killed. He called also for his listeners to develop a "dangerous unselfishness" and said that the question before them, and I would say the question before us today, is "not if I stop to help the sanitation workers," and I am going to add in here, as we would say today, not if we stopped to help the sanitation workers, the teachers, the firefighters, the policemen and all workers whose rights are under attack in our country today, what will happen to my job?

But he said the question is: "If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers what will happen to them?" And as our colleague from New York said, his concern went beyond that. It was also what would happen to our Nation.

He also then said right after that: "Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better Nation."

These words are an urgent call to us today as well, as both of my colleagues have said, to stand with a greater determination on behalf of the working men and women in this country; to stand with a greater determination for help for the poor; to stand with a greater determination for clean air and clean energy for us and our children, clean air for our children and us to breathe, and clean energy and responding to this threat of climate change; to stand with greater determination for jobs and economic opportunity, especially for the most distressed parts of our country; to stand with greater determination for a quality education for every child and to stand with greater determination for equal access to quality health care and wellness for everyone in this country regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or geography.

Another quote from Dr. King that I use often as we talk about health disparities is this quote. He said:—Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

I want to focus on that for a moment because among the many challenges that we face today is that of eliminating the injustice in health care. We Democrats took a major step forward in this effort with the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in the 111th Congress. Not only does it expand coverage to millions of Americans and families who have never had insurance before, but it also includes provisions that would end the travesty which Dr. Martin Luther King called the most shocking and inhumane.

Now that the health care door is finally being opened to all; now that we have furthered the effort to end the discrimination that exists in our health system; now that we have a chance to end the tens of thousands of premature, preventable deaths in people of color, and the poor, and those who live in our rural areas and our territories; now that we have done all of that, the Republican majority is doing everything they can think of to try and slam that door shut again.

□ 2040

In this 40th anniversary year, the Congressional Black Caucus is committed to building upon the legacy of our founders. In the area of health, we are particularly committed to specifically building on the legacy of Congressman Louis Stokes to not let that door or any door be closed to African Americans or to anyone anywhere in this country. We will not let those doors be closed.

And we know that our Democrats will stand with us with greater determination to protect the Affordable Care law and the lives of countless Americans who would continue to be in jeopardy without that law. And it's time for the good people of this country to stand with us.

Let us not have to repent, as Dr. King said, not for actions of bad people, but for the appalling silence of good people.

This country should no longer tolerate that African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans have a much higher infant mortality than our white counterparts; that diabetes and its complications should be so much higher in those same populations as well as in Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders; or that African Americans should have higher death rates from cancer and diabetes than all of the other population groups; or that Native Americans should have higher deaths from sudden infant death syndrome and chronic liver disease than all of the other population groups combined; or that Asian Americans should have such high incidences of tuberculosis, about 24 times the average national rate, and higher incidences of hepatitis B; and no longer should this country tolerate that in 2010, after 8 years, that the Department of Health and Human Services would still be reporting in the national health disparities report that

fewer than 20 percent of disparities faced by African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives and Hispanics showed any evidence of narrowing. Fewer than 20 percent showed any evidence of narrowing.

It is time for all of us to rise to our better nature, as Dr. King would call us to do, and to begin to work together to close gaps faced in many different areas by large segments of our population. We must stand in stronger determination to build that better nation and to realize the beloved community that Dr. King envisioned.

In our 40th year, the Congressional Black Caucus remains more committed, more determined than ever to realizing his dream, a dream that still burns brightly in the hearts of all of us who honor Dr. Martin Luther King and the life that he gave to ensure freedom and justice on behalf of all of us.

With that, I yield to the gentlewoman from Maryland.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Dr. CHRISTENSEN.

I just want to take a moment to yield to my colleague, vice chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus from the great State, my original home State of North Carolina, G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Let me thank the gentlelady for yielding the time this evening and thank her for her leadership in the Congress. The Congressional Black Caucus goes out of its way each week to try to present to the Nation issues that are critically important to African Americans residing in this country, and Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS and Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN have been in the forefront of making that happen. And so I want to thank them so very much for their leadership.

I especially want to thank them for their willingness to come to the floor tonight to commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. April 4 always brings back memories of a very tragic day in the life of our country. It is a day that I shall never, ever forget.

The civil rights movement and the voting rights movement took place during my years in high school. Those were very precious moments in my history, and I remember so well the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The world must remember, our country must remember, we must understand that Martin Luther King's leadership was very profound, but it only lasted for about 13 years. So many people don't recognize that.

Dr. King started his leadership at age 26, and it tragically ended at age 39. It was on December 1 of 1955 that Dr. King was drafted, at age 26, to lead the Montgomery bus boycott. That was the day in Alabama history when the black citizens of Montgomery decided that they would boycott city buses until they could sit anywhere they wanted instead of being relegated to the back when a white citizen boarded the bus.

A black seamstress named Rosa Parks was denied a seat of her choice because of the color of her skin, and Dr. King at the age of 26 took the leadership of that movement and focused the attention of the world on this injustice. And the Supreme Court of this country, the following year, agreed with his position.

Then several years later, in April of 1963, it was on a Friday evening, it was Good Friday, Dr. King again led a march in Birmingham, Alabama, to end segregation in public accommodations. Dr. King was arrested and spent the next 11 days confined in jail. During that time, Mr. Speaker, he wrote that great document called "Letter from Birmingham Jail." I would only wish that our citizens would look up that letter on the Internet and read for themselves "Letter from Birmingham Jail." And several weeks later, the Birmingham leaders announced that local accommodations would be integrated.

After that great victory in Birmingham, and after Dr. King wrote his letter, Dr. King and other civil rights leaders planned and then they executed the 1963 March on Washington. So many of us have heard of and some of us participated in that march. It was a hot summer day here in the Nation's capital on August 28, 1963. I was there as a young 16-year-old high school student.

That march was a demand. It was a demand for civil rights legislation. President John F. Kennedy had agreed with the movement and had made a historic speech on June 11, 1963, calling on this Nation to end segregation in public accommodations. And on June 20, 1963, a bill was introduced into this House of Representatives here on Capitol Hill, and that bill was fiercely debated to provide civil rights for all citizens. But then the march took place in August of 1963. It was a great day; 250,000 people descended on the Nation's capital demanding civil rights. And less than 90 days later, President Kennedy was tragically assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

As a result of his assassination, President Johnson, becoming the President of our country, promised the Nation that the civil rights bill that was pending in the Congress would continue to be debated, and it would be signed into law, and it was, on July 2, 1964.

And so after that civil rights bill was passed, Dr. King received the coveted Nobel Peace Prize. And we honor and we celebrate that great history.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Civil Rights Act was not enough. There had to be a voting rights bill that was debated and passed by this Congress. Finally, in 1965, Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act because of the work of Dr. King.

Because of the Voting Rights Act, there has now been a transformation, a political transformation in the southern part of our country where I am from. I represent eastern North Caro-

lina, which is a community in my State that suffered from years of discrimination and electoral discrimination. But I'm proud to say that in my congressional district alone, there are more than 300 African American elected officials elected to office, and we attribute much of this success to the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I want to thank the gentlelady for recognizing this great American on this day. My home town of Wilson, North Carolina, was supposed to have been the visit of Dr. King on this day in 1968. But because of the events in Memphis, Tennessee, he diverted and went to Memphis to aid with the garbage strike and to help those who could not help themselves. And so we celebrate this great legacy tonight.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Congressman BUTTERFIELD, for your leadership as vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, but also for your reminder of our so important history that is linked both to the struggle of African Americans in this country, to the struggle of labor, and for a reminder also historically of the fact that Dr. King was supposed to have had a next place to be when his life was ended on April 4, 43 years ago today.

□ 2050

I would like to take just this moment, if I could, to recount for us the history of the 1968 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Memphis sanitation workers' strike, the chronology.

Beginning on Sunday, January 31 of that year, the rain sent workers home. Then beginning on Tuesday, February 1 of that year, two sanitation workers were killed in an accident on a city truck.

Then just days later on Monday, February 12, Memphis sanitation and public employees went on strike after last-minute attempts to resolve their grievances had failed. While the newspapers claimed that 200 workers of the 1,300 remained on the job, really only 38 of 180 trucks moved. The mayor of the city said the strike is illegal, but that his office stood ready to talk to anyone about legitimate questions of the time.

Little did these workers know that through the month of February, as black leaders and ministers gathered from city-wide organizations in support of the strike, through the days of March when the ministers and the city announced that Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., would come to Memphis, 116 strikers and supporters were arrested for sitting at city hall. And then through the month of March, the newspapers claimed that the strike was failing as scabs were operating 90 garbage trucks. But 17,000 Memphians attended a rally where Dr. King called for a city-wide march on March 22.

Then as Dr. King returned to Memphis on April 3, and he addressed the rally, delivering his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" address, then that

day, on April 4, on April 4, 1968, as he prepared to march with the workers, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated on the balcony of his hotel in Memphis, Tennessee.

In the days following his assassination, the workers continued their strike in honor of Dr. King and with renewed courage and resolve to demand safe working conditions. It is this simple phrase "I am a man" that drove him, a simple phrase, one that acknowledged their humanhood, one that acknowledged them as workers: I am a man.

And then finally on April 16, some 3 months after the start of their strike, the sanitation workers of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFSCME, agreed and reached an agreement with the city officials, granting an increase in pay, a grievance procedure, and overtime pay.

This is the history of the sanitation workers of Memphis. It is the history of workers throughout this country, and it is the history of workers today.

With that, I would like to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. You know, the dignity that was addressed, the respect factor of "I am a man," that rhetoric that speaks to the working individual, that speaks to humanity, the man, the woman, the child, the dignity of the individual, the respect shown, was all that was embraced in that message, that struck all of America, touched all Americans.

I am of the age that I remember that tragic day. It came so clustered. In a short 5 years, we lost three great leaders to bullets. It is just really a tragic outcome that you can't help but find yourself questioning what if their march continued, how different would America be?

I find it so interesting that his last major appearance and effort was for workers, fighting for workers, for the dignity of work and the dignity of workers.

The assault on workers' rights that he was addressing we see today in the news. We see it in Wisconsin. We see it in Michigan. We see it in Ohio. And it is like the same battles are here to be fought and won.

So the spirit of Martin encourages, I think, builds our determination and our resilience to make a difference. The efforts that America needs to associate with the overall cause and concern for job creation and job retention is so vitally important. Many would choose to have us believe that it is a high rate of firings that is occurring out there, but it is really a low rate of hirings, which is a different sort of saga. We need to invest now in worker opportunities, in training, retraining, in education, and in job creation.

I am a firm believer, and I know many are, that unemployment is driving our deficit and that if we invest in jobs, if we invest in the worker, we will

see a corresponding benefit on the flip side of a reduced deficit for this Nation.

I think the stats tell it all. The bottom 50 percent of income earners in the United States now collectively own less than 1 percent of the Nation's wealth. That is a startling fact. And we need to make certain that there is more justice that is produced out there. As I said earlier, I really do believe that the purchasing power that we can enhance for America's working families, for our middle class, for the mainstream worker out there is an empowerment for all of us. Someone needs to purchase the products that those perched on the top may produce by their ownership. But the worker to build that product and the worker to buy that product is an important key, perhaps the most important ingredient in the equation.

When we look at the fact that some five people are lined up for every job opportunity in this country, and when we look at the fact that workers' rights are under assault today in many areas across this country, there is a great amount of unfinished business.

And on this anniversary commemoration of a great leader's death, it is important for us to recommit our energies and our spirit to speaking to the needs of America's workers. Nothing could honor Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy and the man more vibrantly than speaking to job creation, job retention, workers' rights and prevention of what we are seeing where there is an assault on those rights across this country.

Thank you, Representative EDWARDS, for bringing this solemn opportunity together on this floor where so many issues were addressed in favorable measure, that were driven by the courage and the boldness and the noble vision of Dr. Martin Luther King and other great leaders, like JFK and RFK, who traveled that same era in history.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman from New York and appreciate your leadership and your being here this evening to mark this day with us for workers.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. It should give all of the workers who are fighting for their rights today extra incentive, some extra inspiration as we commemorate this day and all that Dr. Martin Luther King fought for as they continue that fight and we continue to support them in that fight.

I am reminded that on April 7 in the capital of Illinois, in Springfield, I was out there a week ago, they will be having a major rally on behalf of working people in this country. I want to salute the folks in Springfield on that march.

In addition to fighting for workers' rights, when Dr. King died, he was planning the Poor People's Campaign in Washington. I was here studying for my boards. I went over to volunteer in

the medical tent. It rained and it poured; but people came in from all over this country, particularly the South, to the Poor People's Campaign to call attention to the plight of the poor in this country.

As we are celebrating as a Congressional Black Caucus our 40th anniversary, we are still carrying on that fight. Our main agenda, theme, is "Creating Pathways Out of Poverty." We have had that as our agenda for the last 2 years, and we continue with that for this Congress as well.

That was a remarkable time as well. I think it did a lot to change my life in the middle of my medical studies and the course of my career. It probably has something to do with why I am here today. I wanted to also just remind everyone that as we fight for the workers, and remember Dr. King's fight for working men and women, he also was steadfastly working to help define pathways out of poverty for those who were poor then; and we continue in our 40th year to fight for the poor and help them find ways to lift them up and lift their families out of poverty.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman for her leadership and in bringing us together in these important hours on the floor of the House of Representatives to discuss the issues that are of the deepest concern to communities of color, to working families across this country, and a reminder of the reason why many of us have chosen to serve.

□ 2100

Dr. King knew so deeply that the middle class is, indeed, the backbone of the American economy and that by strengthening the middle class we move our Nation forward. He would understand today that, by giving tax breaks to oil companies and special privileges to the wealthy, we forget our allegiance to the most populous among us—the middle class. He understood the importance of the struggle of sanitation workers, of organizing workers, of making sure that workers were able to take care of themselves and their families as a way of moving workers into the middle class. He understood, like so many of us do, particularly for African American people, that our connection to organized labor is so important because it is through the ability to organize and to fight for our rights against injustice that we are able to move our families into the middle class.

Dr. King knew so tremendously the connection between the plight of Negroes and working people. He said at the AFL-CIO convention in December 1961: "Negroes are almost entirely a working people. There are pitifully few Negro millionaires and few Negro employers. Our needs are identical with labor's needs—decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow,

have education for their children and respect in the community.” Dr. King spoke those words in December 1961. Those words could be spoken today.

Dr. King reminded the workers of the United Auto Workers at the District 65 convention in September 1962 that in the area of politics that labor and African Americans, Negroes, have identical interests. He said: “Labor has grave problems today of employment, shorter hours, old age security, housing, and retraining against the impact of automation. The Congress and the administration are almost as indifferent to labor’s program as they are toward that of the Negro. Toward both, they offer vastly less than adequate remedies for the problems which are a torment to us day after day.”

Those words spoken today speak to the plight of the workforce, to minority communities and to working families across this country. Those words spoken in 1962 could be spoken today in 2011, some 40 some years later.

One of the things that I continue to be touched by is that I was just a young girl when Dr. King died on April 4, but I always remember that day. I remember that day in my family. I remember the sadness and the tragedy, but I also remember the struggle. I think generations since my own and up until now recall that struggle and, I think, today, for the sanitation workers and remembering their struggle of some 3 months to gain the respect and dignity in the workplace: I am a man.

Now, if we had to create this placard today, we might write “I am a woman; I am a man; I am a human being”; but it still speaks to the same value, to the value of humanity and justice in the workplace. That’s the value that Dr. King spoke to. It is a value for which he died. It is a value that lives in his legacy.

So, again, I am just pleased that my colleagues have been able to join with us today, not on a day of sadness, April 4, but on a day of remembrance, on a day of reinvigoration and recommitment to those ideals that have guided us and that continue to guide us in our struggle with and for the workers across this country.

With that, I would like to yield again, just very briefly, to my colleague from New York, PAUL TONKO.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative EDWARDS.

I would have to say that I truly believe that, if Dr. King were in our presence today, he would remind us that a budget is a series of priorities. What we place high, what we place most precious in that budget, we would see as a document that speaks to a family. Just like a household will balance its needs, its concerns with its ability to pay and put together the balancing, so too does the family of America require that sort of tender balancing.

He would remind us, whether they are employed, critically unemployed or marginally underemployed, whatever the situation might be, that today

America’s middle class families are living paycheck to paycheck. That’s becoming more and more the scenario. He would have suggested, look, we need to take that concern for mortgages, that concern for college tuition, that concern for just pay, that concern for utility bills, that concern for food costs and energy costs, and we need to invest in the American working families.

Contrast that with what the other scenario might look like: handouts to oil companies, corporate loopholes that are not shut, tax breaks for the most comfortable in society. That is the contrast he would challenge us to face head on and to understand it’s about social and economic justice. It’s about bringing more balance, more fairness into the equation.

As a clergyman, he embraced the faith and brought it into the community; he brought it into America; he challenged us to respond in compassionate measure. We have it within our means to do this in a fair and just way, and that’s why we are at a tipping point in this Nation’s history where we need to look at revitalizing the middle class.

I represent many modest annual income households. They have told me their fear is about maintaining their homes; their fear is about educating their children; their fear is about tomorrow having the opportunity. I’m optimistic that we can do it because we have the skills here within the Congress to make it happen and to make it work in a progressive fashion. Do we have the will? That would be the challenge. That would be the challenge from Dr. King this very evening: Do we have the will to move forward in a progressive fashion?

So thank you, Representative EDWARDS, for bringing us together tonight in tribute to a giant of an individual, an icon in our midst.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mr. TONKO.

With that, I’d like to yield to Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

Just briefly, I want to again thank you for helping us to commemorate not only the sanitation workers’ strike but the life and legacy of Dr. King.

It is unfortunate, as we are here tonight, remembering the day that the assassination took place of this great American and great human being, that the day after, we expect a budget that is going to do just the opposite of what Dr. King would have wanted us to do.

In the last Congress, we were able to strengthen Medicare, to expand its solvency 12 years. We were able to pass the Affordable Care Act, which would expand Medicaid and make sure that, even though you were poor, you would have the ability to have quality health care. Tomorrow, we expect a budget that’s going to talk about privatizing Medicare, ending it as we know it—sacrificing the health care for seniors and children—making an enormous cut in Medicaid, and really taking away the

hope that people had when we passed the Affordable Care Act that they could not only have health care but that they could really aspire to improving their health—their own well-being as well as that of their families and their communities.

So we meet here this evening to talk about Dr. King, to talk about the challenges that our working men and women have, and to talk about the challenges of health care for those who are poor—those of all races and ethnicities—and to recommit ourselves in the memory of Dr. King to fight for working men and women and for those who need that extra hand to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

□ 2110

I just want to say that the Congressional Black Caucus has been doing this for 40 years now.

I want to again recognize our founding members for their perspicacity and their perseverance—we still have two of those members serving with us, Congressman CHARLES RANGEL and Congressman JOHN CONYERS—and to let the American people know that we will continue to fight on their behalf tomorrow and every day as long as it is necessary.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you very much, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN.

I am so proud to be a member of the Congressional Black Caucus with a 40-year history and legacy of fighting for justice and looking out for the most vulnerable and giving voice to people who would not have a voice in this United States Congress.

We are about ready to close, and I would like to end the evening and the hour by pointing those at home, those in this Chamber to an op-ed in today’s paper that actually brings together the two forces that Dr. King was bringing together even just before he was so tragically assassinated, bringing together the civil rights movement and the labor movement.

In an op-ed today in today’s Washington Post entitled, “The Middle Class Dream That Cannot Die,” Benjamin Todd Jealous, who is the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, and Mary K. Henry, who is the international president of the Service Employees International Union, draw together that middle class dream for the American people that’s built on a foundation of civil rights and social justice and partnered with labor and working people.

“I Am a Man.” I would like to close this evening by reminding again, all of us, that April 4 and the years we remember in between are years about building upon a tragedy to build a legacy. “I Am a Man.” Dr. King reminded us again about the fight for jobs and retirement security and health care and care for the most vulnerable.

Those are still today’s struggles: the workers that we’ve spoken about in

Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana and all across this country who struggle for that dignity. "I Am a Man," Dr. King's words, in his famous speech, "I've Been to the Mountain Top" that he spoke just before he was assassinated. And I just want to read a portion of that that really speaks to me as a Member of Congress, as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Dr. King said: "Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better Nation."

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

FAIR TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RENACCI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. I thank the Speaker.

I'm glad I was able to get in on the tail end of that previous Special Order. As a proud resident of the State of Georgia, of course we have the King Center open to folks each and every day of the week. And if folks have not had a chance to go by and see that, it is really a fantastic testimony to the life and times of a gentleman whose true impact on this country we may not know for generations and generations to come. I could not be prouder to have that in Georgia, so I very much appreciate being able to listen in.

I, too, am down here to talk about opportunity tonight. It is April 4, it's tax season, and the Fair Tax is a proposal that is near and dear to my heart and a proposal that I believe has its time coming in opportunity.

The largest tax that 80 percent of American families pay, Mr. Speaker, is the payroll tax. That's the FICA tax that our teenagers begin to see when they take on their part-time jobs. Eighty percent of American families pay more in that FICA tax than they do in income taxes or any other tax on their ledger, and yet we spend all of our time talking about income taxes.

We rarely take a look at the payroll tax. We'll spend hours on the House floor talking about tax credits and tax deductions and tax expenditures and tax exemptions. We'll talk about lobbyists and the tax opportunities that they're looking for for their big business clients. We'll talk about loopholes and all of the unfairness of the United States Tax Code, but we rarely talk about the payroll tax.

It has been my commitment here in this month of April—which is one of the few times during the year that everyone is willing to focus on taxes for an extended period of time—to come down here and implore my colleagues to take a look at the Fair Tax and join us in our fight to repeal the income

tax—both the personal income tax and the corporate income tax—the payroll tax, the capital gains tax, the gift tax, dividend tax, estate tax, self-employment tax, and on and on, to replace them all with a single-rate personal consumption tax, the Fair Tax.

I was talking with a CEO in my district while I was home who said, Rob, we're trying to leave America just as fast as we can. You've passed some laws recently that make it a little harder for us to do that, it's going to take us some time, but we're leaving as fast as we can because America is just not a climate to do business in anymore.

We heard my colleagues who spoke previously say that our unemployment isn't because people are being fired; it's because new people are not being hired, and the folks who generate those jobs are the small businesses in this country. How do you generate those jobs when you have the highest corporate tax rate in the world, when you have some of the highest self-employment taxes in the world, and on and on and on?

We can do a lot in this country to destroy success. We can't do a lot to create success. We have a platform here in this country already on which anyone, by the sweat of their brow, can make something of themselves. And yet one of the founders of Home Depot—a very proud company from the great State of Georgia—wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* last year that if he and his three colleagues got together today to try to start that company they would fail, that they could not succeed in starting a company in today's business environment, the regulatory environment, the labor environment, and the tax environment.

Here in April I'll be returning to the floor each and every day through April 15 to talk about one little part of the Fair Tax. We talked a little bit last Friday about how it does away with every single corporate exemption on the books—every loophole, every credit, every favor, absolutely every one. It's the only bill in Congress that does that, Mr. Speaker. It eliminates every single corporate loophole in the Tax Code because we know that businesses don't pay taxes anyway. We eliminate the corporate income tax, and we allow that to be paid at the personal consumer level.

Tonight, I just want to talk about jobs. I want to talk about that jobs don't come from the Federal Government, that jobs don't even come from big corporations. Jobs come from small entrepreneurs and risk-takers.

The power to tax is the power to destroy, and we have used the power to tax income, to tax that productiveness that each and every American goes to work for every day. Our Founding Fathers had a different view; they taxed consumption. They put tariffs on the goods that they imported from overseas under the theory that if you had enough money to spend on a silver tea

set from England, you had enough money to participate in funding your Federal Government.

That all changed in the early part of the 20th century, and we have an opportunity to change it back, H.R. 25, the Fair Tax—the single most largely co-sponsored tax bill in either the House or the Senate, more cosponsors on that bill than any other piece of fundamental tax legislation. We need more help. Today, we have 59 cosponsors of that legislation, and we need more help to make the Fair Tax a reality.

We'll have, over the next 15 days, those opportunities. You can visit our Web page at Woodall.house.gov. You can visit the Fair Tax folks' Web page at fairtax.org. Come and see what the Fair Tax offers in terms of opportunity.

The current Tax Code brings power to this city. Whether you sit on the left or whether you sit on the right, something happens when you get to Washington and you suddenly believe you're the smartest person in the room, and you begin to find ways to manipulate people's behavior in hopes that you can make them happy too.

□ 2120

Well, I could create a world my father would love and my mother would hate.

We're not in the business of making people happy. We're in the business of ensuring opportunity. We can absolutely ensure that everyone in this country is poor. We cannot ensure that everyone is rich. We can only provide opportunity. The Fair Tax provides that opportunity by completely removing the impediments that are there to growth today.

Eighty percent of American families pay more in payroll taxes than income taxes. As you fill out your tax forms headed towards April 15, I want you to look at that income tax figure. And if you're self-employed, you'll see the self-employment tax figure there beside it. Eighty percent of American families never get touched by a tax bill that we do here.

As we move the Fair Tax forward, we're going to change that, and we're going to make America an opportunity society once again.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful to you for indulging me this evening to talk a little bit about a passion that's near and dear to my heart.

I yield back the balance of my time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.